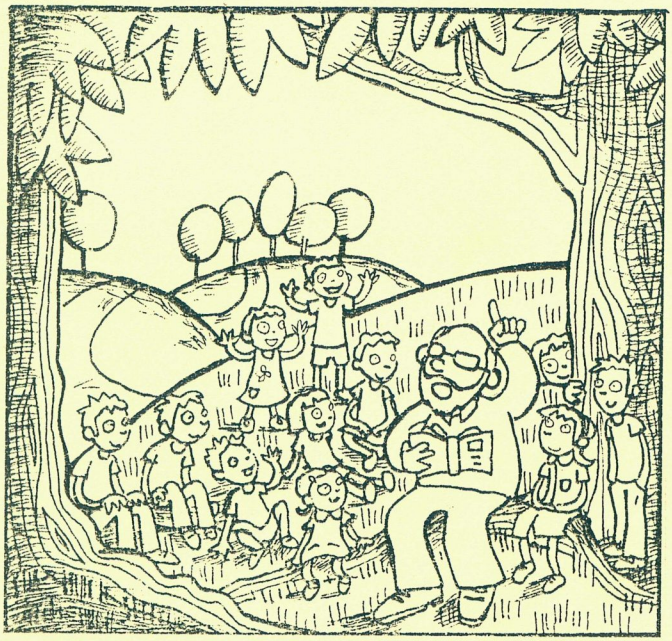
WALLOON, KNOW IT ANYMORE?



GEORGES DARMONT PRIZE – WALLOON BRABANT

Supplement to Reflet de chez nous, May–June 2004.
Royal Association of Walloon Writers
(A.R.E.W.)

GEORGES DARMONT PRIZE – PROVINCE OF WALLOON BRABANT

Under the chairmanship of Valmy Féaux, Honorary Governor

Last year, you will remember, the Georges Darmont Prize concerned the Province of Namur, and it led to the publication of a special issue of *Reflet de chez nous*: *Raconte-moi ton village* (Tell Me About Your Village).
First of all, let us recall that this prize was founded by Georges Darmont, our senior member, who is now 104 years old. Georges Darmont was for many years a schoolteacher, then an inspector of primary education. He wrote many works, in French as well as in Walloon, and a number of them were written for children. So we have taken from *Bluettes* a poem in which we see that things, and flowers in particular, can become one with words:

THE POPPIES

The poppies
Are words of red
That have no mouth now,
And go off, wild and fierce,
Across the fields of wheat,
Toward the endless plain,
To cry out the madness
Of the forgotten dead.

The poppies
Are words of red,
Raging, wild and fierce,
That have no mouths now!

This year our prize has grown, thanks to a generous donation from the Fédération culturelle du Brabant wallon in Nivelles, and another donation from our friend René Régordane (René De Smedt), of Rebecq. Let us recall that René Régordane was the first winner of the prize of the communes of western Walloon Brabant, created on the happy initiative

of Janine Riche and the commune of Rebecq. We recently presented his novel *Le Rendez-vous de Compostelle* in these pages.
We decided to reserve this prize first and foremost for Walloon Brabant (even though young people from other regions took part, and placed well). We gave it the theme: *Wallon, connais plus* (Walloon, know it anymore?). Young people were asked to find out from older people the five most beautiful Walloon words. The jury met under the chairmanship of Valmy Féaux, honorary governor of the province and an actor in the Walloon theatre. Its other members were Willy Chaufoureau, Jean-Marie Pierret, Jean-Jacques Gaziaux and Joseph Bodson. The prize will be awarded next Thursday, 22 April, at 6 p.m., at the Maison de la Francité, 18 rue Joseph II, at a session where poems by Walloon authors from different regions will also be read; you will find them in this booklet, together with their translations.

But first, here are the candidates' texts. They are arranged in alphabetical order: we did not want to anticipate the awarding of the prizes.

The members of the jury also handed in their own papers, which you will find below. Some, starting with our chairman, were very brief; others had rather more to say…

THE FIVE MOST BEAUTIFUL WALLOON WORDS

Answers from the members of the jury

Valmy Féaux

My five Walloon words: **"pouyon" ('m petit pouyon)**; **"prandjère" (fé 's prandjère)** = to take one's nap; **"tchafîau"** = a chatterbox; **"daladje" (ké daladje)**; **"margaye"** = a quarrel.

Willy Chaufoureau

My five most beautiful Walloon words:

1) **Vîr voltî**: to love; all the more harmonious since our Aclot dialect has no familiar "tu" form.
2) **Pouyon**, chick, but also a term of affection.
3) **Bistoke**, a present given for a celebration or a birthday.

4) **Meûmeûre**: the fruit of the bramble, the blackberry.
5) **Tchoupére**: a little carved figure, a little man that can still be seen at the bottom of the windows of old townhouses; it holds the shutters open (*batantes* in Walloon), or releases them so they can be closed, when it is turned upward or downward.

It goes without saying that our beautiful language holds countless words and verbs, rich in their etymology or their harmony, which our best poets have known how to bring out.

Joseph Bodson: spaûrgnants: thrifty. Heaven knows our grandparents were, and that for them a franc was a franc! And heaven knows how hard they had worked to earn it. **Vièspréye**: evening. The gentlest moment of the day, when the vesper bells had fallen silent. **Bèdos**: sheep. All the softness of wool and of bleating, coming down the woodland paths toward the meadows of the Sambre. **Chabaréyes**: daffodils. A word that bursts out like a brass band to announce the spring. **Jolibwès**: lilac. Needs no comment.

Jean-Marie Pierret

Five words from the Walloon of Tronquoy
(former commune of Longlier)

When I was very young, I learned that what I called the rainbow, *l'arc-en-ciel*, in Walloon as in French, was given names by the oldest people of my little village of Tronquoy, in the Chestrolais country, that I did not understand but that clearly had something to do with religion, and more precisely with Saint John: *la rôye sint-Djån*, *la corôye sint-Djån*, *la crôye sint-Djån*. A *rôye*, to me, was a good straight furrow, for every ploughman took pride in ploughing straight furrows. The *corôye* was that nasty lump of damp, heavy dough that collected against the bottom crust of a badly risen loaf made from flour of

poor quality — this was common at the end of the war, or when rotten summers made it impossible to dry the spelt properly. The *crôye* was beyond my understanding: why on earth did Walloon give this word *crôye*, which usually means a piece of chalk, or a door left ajar, or a gap between two planks, to the rainbow, which we had been taught at catechism was the sign of a covenant between God and mankind? Enough to sow doubt in a young boy's mind. Old people had also taught me that the rainbow was an infallible barometer: *la corôye sint-Djån, quand 'lle è l' pièd a l' êwe, c' èst signe du pieuve*, "when the rainbow has its foot in the water (that is, in a stream), it's a sign of rain". But above all they had confided a secret to me, far more important to a little boy than weather forecasts: if you searched carefully at the foot of the rainbow, you would find little knives there. A penknife to carry with you in the countryside when you take the cattle to the meadow — what a treasure! With it you could make a fine stick, a whistle, a peashooter and all sorts of toys from hazel or elder branches. I dreamed of it for a very long time, but I never had the luck to discover the treasure. The only thing I discovered, later on, was that the *rôye* was not a furrow but simply a "stripe", that the *corôye* was not that inedible lump of bread but a "strap", and that the word had been altered into *crôye* because people no longer understood it. As for why the rainbow was called Saint John's stripe or Saint John's strap, that is another matter…

The *Tchôr Peûtchèt* (literally: "Tom Thumb's wagon") also set me dreaming. It is the Great Bear, and I had been taught that from the last two "wheels" of this *Grand Tchôr* (its other name) it was very easy to find the Pole Star. *Peûtchèt* reminded me of the rhyme my mother recited when she took me on her knee, teasing each of my fingers in turn: *Peûtchèt, Laridè, Grande Dame, Djån d' la Sô, P'tit Courtôd*, which I always took to be *p'tit coutô*, "little knife" — of course! In "poetry" class, when we studied Rimbaud, I thought again of the *Tchôr Peûtchèt*…

« Dreamy Tom Thumb, along my way I sowed
« My rhymes. My inn was at the Great Bear. »

In spring, the village children went off to gather a rich harvest of frogspawn, which they watched, eager and impatient, turn into tadpoles and then into *guèrnouyes*, frogs. My father said *dès rin·nes* and I understood « des reines », "queens", of course. In the middle of the woods, the place called *la Fagne d' la Rin·ne* would

turn into an immense yellow carpet at the beginning of spring. I imagined that it was in honour of the "queen" of the place that all those *fleûrs d'avri* ("daffodils") grew there. We used to bring big bunches of them to our one-room primary school, no doubt because we hoped the arithmetic lesson would be replaced by a lesson in botany and drawing. Although I now know that the *rin·ne* is not a "queen" but, far more prosaically, a "*raine*", a frog (the word was still used in French in the 17th century), daffodils still grow in the *Fagne d' la Rin·ne*. Every year my brother picks dozens of bunches there for the residents of the Clos des Seigneurs care home. I must ask him whether he, too, believed in the little queen of the Fagne.

At the end of the Second World War, Saint Nicholas was not always very generous. That is understandable: times were hard for everyone. At an old aunt's house he brought us delicious *mitchots* every year, but for us it was no surprise, since all autumn long, every time the setting sun turned the sky red, we had been told: *v'là co sint Nicolås qui cût sès mitchots* ("there's Saint Nicholas baking his brioches again"). We were sure he would bring us *mitchots* at Aunt Marie's.

At primary school we learned that under the Ancien Régime the villages just north of ours, Bernimont, Sainte-Marie-Chevigny and Ourt, were not part of the Duchy of Luxembourg but belonged to the Land of Saint-Hubert, itself a possession of the Prince-Bishopric of Liège. It was no doubt to this status as "foreigners" that the *Balôs* — the nickname given to the people of those villages — owed their reputation for being simple. In the old days, so it was said, these poor oafs had been made to "beat the water" to silence the frogs, whose croaking disturbed the rest of the local lords. We never doubted the origin of their nickname, or this explanation. And yet, if the *Balôs* came under the abbey of Saint-Hubert, they had no lord. And in Walloon, "beat the water" ought to have been *bat l'êwe*…

These Walloon "beautiful words", which I began to think about very early on, are responsible for a passion that took hold of me at university and has never left me: studying language and discovering in it the messages our ancestors have handed down to us. And for me, who was still

lucky enough to hear Walloon spoken from my earliest years, they are also a key that opens the door to the wonderful world of childhood.

Jean-Jacques Gaziaux

À l' tchèsse aus bias mots

On djou d' nulēye quë v' vèyoz on-**ērdiè**, c'èst l' momint dè prinde vosse pani au trésôr po-z-aler rascoude dès bias mots. Më, djë cache pës volti après dès mots qu' chël'tēy'nèt à voste orèye ou bén dès cës plins d' coleûrs quë vos fēy'nèt sondji à one bèle oumâdje...
Djë m' vwè co à on d'bout dè l' grande aurbalète : one djon.ne **safrète** më soriyeûve à l' përe flëtche d'on cèriji. Tot-en-grëpant, dj'a fait èvoler dès cints d' mots lèdjêrs come dès papëlions. À l' copète, on mauvës m'a chëflé dès mots dous po **Mastouche :** dès vèt' à l' fé rödjë, dès rôses à l' rinde rwède bloûwe dë vos...Èt bén au r'cwè dins l' paradës dès fouyas qu' frëm'jin', n'avans racafougni lès cafloradjes dë s' cörsadje...

On côp d' ton'wère m'a fait voler aus sèt' cints diâles, trëviès lès bouchons dë spënes avou dès sörcîres èt dès–**oulotes.** Èt nos v'là dins l'infêr dès mots qu'ont mau, dès strëpis, dès mèsbrëdjis, maria dèyi ! dins lès brous, lès strons, lès crénces, lès crayas...Ètindoz lès laids mots, lès gros, lès craus, lès cës qu'on s'ècrëke ? Choutez lès pöves mots dès brëbeûs, usés come dès vis caurs, dès djins qu'ont fwin èt quë grul'nèt...quë n'ont ni l' crédët d' tchwèsë dès bias mots...
Gazis moyas, tchamossés, cèrvias bourés d' cènes...**Pouchêre** !
Mins avoz trèvèyë l' lëm'rote à l' rayèle ?! On fouyant vént d' dëstèrer on vi mot èronë : « Bonté ». Cand n' l'arans r'chëré come on pièle, ça nos rindrè këd'fîye o miète pës mëdones. Adon on pourè soner lès clokes po l' rëgodon d' tos lès mots walons. Vos v'noz, Mastouche...

Jean-Jacques Gaziaux (Djaucelète), lë 8 dë maus' 2004.

Notes on the author's spelling (Namur Walloon – eastern Brabant):

ë : sound quite close to the unstable e of French;
ē : medium-length sound, more open than é;
én : closed é, half-nasalised;
ö : closed, long o, tending toward ou.

Translation: *Hunting for Beautiful Words.*

On a stormy day, if you see a rainbow, that is the moment to take your treasure basket and go gathering beautiful words. Myself, I look above all for words that ring clear in your ear, or else words full of colour that make you dream of a lovely picture…

I can still see myself at one end of the great arc: a pretty young girl was smiling at me from the very tip of a cherry tree. As I climbed, I sent hundreds of words flying up, light as butterflies. At the top, a blackbird whistled sweet words to me for Capucine: green ones that would make her blush, pink ones that would turn her quite blue with longing… And safe in the paradise of the trembling leaves, we crumpled the coloured flowers of her bodice…

A clap of thunder sent me flying to the four hundred devils, through the hawthorn bushes, with witches and owls. And here we are in the hell of words that hurt, of the crippled and the maimed, Mother of God! in the mud, the dung, the siftings, the cinders… Do you hear the ugly words, the coarse ones, the fat ones, the ones people choke on? Listen to the poor words of beggars, worn like old pennies, the words of people who are hungry and who grumble… who have no chance to choose beautiful words…

Mute throats, mouldy throats, brains stuffed with ashes… Dust!

But have you glimpsed the little light at the cellar window? A mole has just dug up an old, rusty word: “Kindness”. Once we have scoured it till it shines like a pearl, it may make us a little more generous. Then we can ring the bells for the farandole of all the Walloon words. Are you coming, Capucine…

Here now are the texts from our competitors. We thought it worthwhile to add extracts from the note that accompanied them, or the whole note, since it is sometimes very interesting. They are simply arranged here in alphabetical order, beginning with the group entries from two schools, those of Basse-Wavre and Wauthier-Braine.

It's hard to talk about Walloon to 11-year-olds in a Wavre classroom at the dawn of the 21st century! Yet we took up the challenge, and a few delicious words have come down to us. We chose 5 of them for our class. Here they are:

- **spitter**: because this verb sounds like little jets of water (the famous « spit ») and stings the skin just like them.
- **one boutroûle**: because the navel is a little hole (bouTROUle — *trou*, hole) through which a little cord (BOUTroule — *bout*, end) once tied us to our mum.
- **des comme mî, on n'en fait pû**: because it's written on Jonathan's dad's T-shirt!
- **c'est toudi les p'tits qu'on sprôtche**: because it's true, but also for the superb, untranslatable sound of *sprôtchi*, to crush with a squelching, dripping noise — what a metaphor!
- **ma p'tite tchawette, c'est'on arsouille**: because all the affection of parents and grandparents is in this expression.

We also rediscovered: dji vous min dji'n pou, al copette, des cûtès peûres, pèter èvoï, gletter, crapaute, Kawa, biêsse, tiestû etc… (spelling at random, of course). In short, we came to see the incomparable richness of Walloon words; let's hope these magnificent expressions will never be lost. See you soon,

(Hélène, Jonathan and Catherine, 6th year)
93-95, chaussée des Gaulois
1300 Wavre (Mr Corbay's class)

Wauthier-Braine, 16.12.2003

Dear Sir,

We are a group of children aged 2½ to 12 who go to the after-school club at our school.
We saw your competition in our local newspaper and, among the older ones, we decided to take part.
So what we are presenting to you is a group effort.
Thank you for the attention you will give it.
Jordan. Marie. Céline. Aurélie. Logan. Sarkis.

I. Survey by Aurélie Van Esbeek (age 11)

I am interviewing my great-grandmother, who chooses the following words:
Des « braies »: these are babies' nappies; the word probably comes from the name of the trousers worn by the ancient Gauls.
« **Nowé** »: a word for the season. It makes us think of our Walloon Christmases, the crib, the *cougnous* (Christmas buns) and even the black pudding that was always on the menu after midnight Mass.
Un « bètch' »: (a kiss) All the tenderness in the world is in this word. On the other hand, a « bètchaud » sometimes has a pejorative ring, since it means someone who is too cuddly, a bit of a bootlicker.
Un « mouchon »: (a little bird) it is also the affectionate name given to a small child. Grandmothers love to use this word.

L' « huche » (the door): a word that is often used, but I particularly love the sound of it.

II. Survey by Céline Van Herp (age 12)

I am interviewing my grandfather:

« I think village names sound better in Walloon than in French »

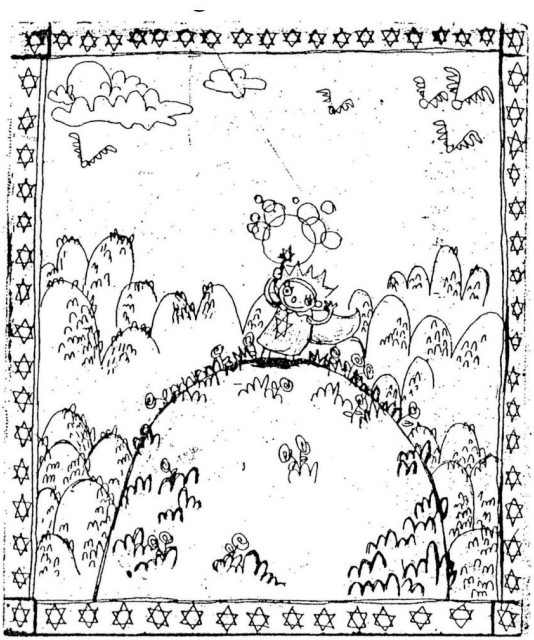
When you are a native of « **Vesnau** » or « **Darmé** » (Virginal and **Dampremy)** you are even more Walloon than if you use the French names.
I also like the verb « **ratchir** », which means to lie. The « brautes » people tell are more like tall tales than real lies.

To finish, I choose the expression « **En ramasser chinq su 's n'oreille/su 's loupe** » (to get a "five" on the ear / on the snout). It hurts so much less than a slap!

III. Survey by Sarkis Geerts (age 12)

I am interviewing my youth leader, Brigitte.
I choose

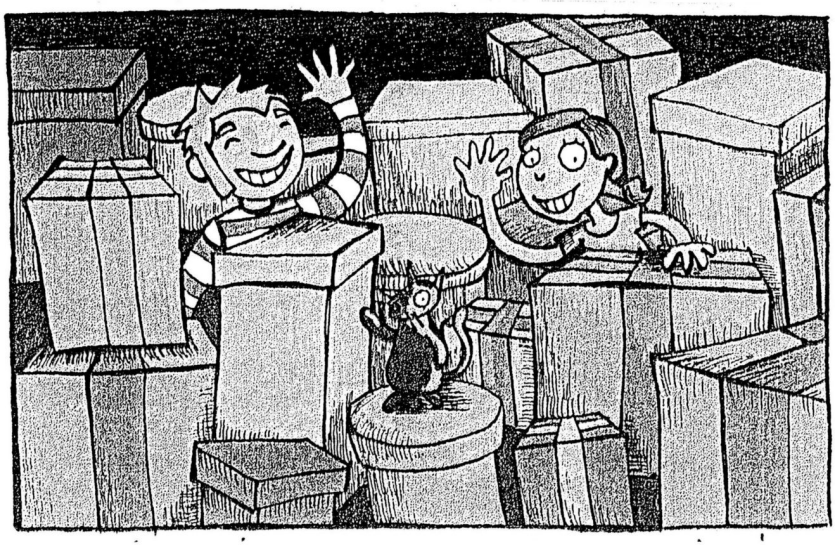
- an expression: **« N' royè nin, l' Bon Dieu desroye »**
  My great-grandmother often used this expression, which means there is no point worrying in advance about something; it usually turns out differently from what you expected.
- a **callaudeuse**: This word has two meanings. 1) It is a pan for heating milk without it boiling over. 2) It is a woman who often goes to « callauder » (gossip) at her neighbours' (*vijins*)
- **Vautes** (or *restons*) – pancakes. I can still smell them. When my grandmother made her *vautes*, it was a party!
- « **J'ai un scare/chinq à m' maronne** ». Another delicious expression. You were scared to go home when you had news like that to tell your mum.
- And finally I choose a « **grigne-dint** ». That's someone who grumbles about every little thing. Who « marmouses » for hours – it's very funny!



IV. Marie Herregods interviews her parents (age 11)

They choose:

- **Vitoulets**: These are meatballs that used to be made, in the old days, for young men who were picked by drawing lots and had to do a very long military service. We liked the word because it recalls an important page of our history.
- **Trianer**: you « triane » with impatience, that is, you quiver with impatience. When we were little, we often « trianed » as the holidays drew near, waiting to open our presents.
- **L' coq'moire bout su' l'estuf**: the kettle is boiling on the stove: when we went to our grandparents', there was always a lovely smell of coffee. And if Granny had made a **s'tuvet** (stew), it was paradise. Even if it sat heavy « **su no stoumac** » (on our stomach)!



V. **Logan Kosman (age 11) interviews Marie-Jeanne, our cleaning lady.**

She chooses:

« **A s'crienne** »: which tells us about the evenings of long ago when family and neighbours got together, « s'racculotant » (huddling) around the fire in winter to tell each other, all evening long, stories each more extraordinary than the last. It is also the title of our local newspaper.

« **Imbisé** »: literally, it means to be chilled to the bone, but also to be a bit slow on the uptake. If the case is more hopeless, you will say that the person is « **'n miette djondu** ». Ouch…!

To keep going with the compliments, telling someone that they have « **crons dous** » (crooked fingers) is calling them a thief – what a lovely, vivid expression!

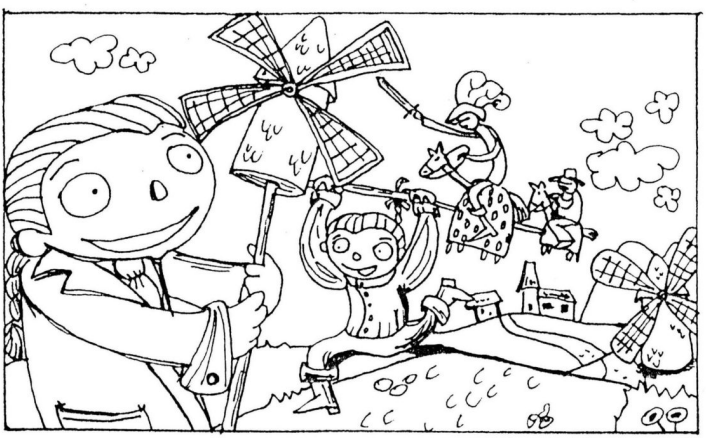
I also like the word « **berdouille** », which seems to me to stress how dirty mud is. You can just see the person covered in it right over their head!

VI. **Jordan Valek (age 10) interviews Christiane, Brigitte's mum.**

She chooses:

« La loque à r'loq'ter »: You can picture all the women doing their « Saturday » cleaning with great sloshes of buckets of water, and the endless dance of floorcloths and brushes.
« Un quertin » (shopping bag): this too is an essential item in a housewife's life, and it was part of village life when everyone met up at the corner « shop ».
« Un catarrhe »: You look far worse off when you have a *catarrhe* than when you just have a cold!
« Un marou »: How handsome the tomcat is, with his big head!

« Un arnagat »: The mischievous child described in all his glory… in a single word!



We were also told about our forebears' « **mastocs** » (silver coins with a hole in them), the « **garlot** » (big coffee pot), the « **feuillart** » (beech), « **bulloques** » (plums), « **gaies du gayis** » and the famous « **djambot** » (baby).
Sometimes the « **vijins** » (neighbours) come round for a « **rawette** » of « **bûre** » (butter), « **in rastia** ».
Sometimes, too, a « **galant** » meets « **s'coumére** » « **in muchète des parins** »…
While Christiane loved the country picture of the « **gate** » (nanny goat) with her « **gadelot** » (kid) frisking in the « **pachis** » (meadows) among the « **bedots** » (sheep), nobody dared to put the word « **stron** » (turd) in their survey, but we all had a good laugh!
There were so many, many others.
Where we got few answers was on spelling. We tried more or less phonetic spelling, without much conviction.

So please forgive the massacre of our beautiful language.
Everyone (adults and children) had a wonderful time doing this competition.
Thank you for bringing our fondest memories back to life.

From all of us.

After-school club of the Coccinelles school
(Wauthier-Braine municipal school)
c/o Brigitte Beys (youth leader)
rue des Ecoles, 3
1440 Wauthier-Braine

Dekandelaer Jean-Charles
Born 24 October 1990
Avenue Montecarlo 104/52
1190 Forest

In reply to your « Georges Darmont/Walloon Brabant » competition, here are the five favourite words of my grandparents, who come from the Tournai area:

Baquet:

The *baquet* is not, in the present-day sense, a washtub, but a flat-bottomed boat towed along our rivers and canals by a team of haulers (Walloon Volga boatmen, in short)

Hauling is called here: *saquer à baquet*.
Ratournûre: the expression *I saque à baquet* describes a dancer who manhandles his partner, pumping his arms wildly up and down in time to the music.

Muchete:

It's a charming word that makes you think of *minouche* (pussycat). But it means « hiding place ». The word « mucher » (to hide) also existed in French, and though it is no longer heard there, it lives on in the dialect. Grandmother says she came across it in the writing of Arthur Masson, in the Toine Culot series.
Pice-crosse:

This word, which isn't from the Tournai area, is known to my grandparents, who find it funny: it paints the miser who pinches his slice of bread right down to the crust so as not to share it with anyone. French used to say *pince-maille*, a *maille* being a coin of little value.

Plintiveux:

The word would make you think of a plaintive, moaning creature. A misleading likeness: it means « wide ». *Ed costume plintiveux* = a suit that is too big.

Petaude:

From his military service, where he was sometimes put to peeling potatoes, Grandfather remembered that « pèler lès pètaudes » (peeling the spuds) became « pèler les canadas » for people from Namur, and « pèler les crompires » for people from Liège. The word « crompire » also means potato among the Yugoslavs (a souvenir of the grandparents' holidays).

Finding a few Walloon words, loving them, explaining what they stand for to me… yes, but what is Walloon to me? Does the younger generation know the flavours of this language of the land? Of course, as a Belgian, some expressions turn up in my everyday vocabulary… but where does the difference lie? What should we consider « Belgian », and what should we call « Walloon »? Is « Belgian » today's Walloon, brought up to date and mixed with anglicisms? Is Walloon dying out? Isn't this patois, witness to our heritage, considered « vulgar »?

Questions that we under-40s have every right to ask… why did our parents' generation forget, or reject, this dialect so dear to our Belgian hearts? Where does young people's eagerness to rediscover these flavours of the past come from? How many of them ask their grandparents to fill in the parental « gaps »… In short, Walloon? A very fitting subject in the never-ending questioning that every self-respecting young person goes through…

« Vous n'avî nin dandjî d'causer wallon! » (You've no need to speak Walloon!), we are told. And yet how cheerful the word « **dandjî** » (need) is to hear… that particular sound, so close to « dandy », but — amusing contrast — one that no dandy would ever utter for anything in the world! Then again, the dandy who comes here to show off (« **esbrouffe** ») might well make a crate of apples « **tchêr** » (fall) and end up as « **cabuchî** » (bruised) as they are… « n'auroû pu rî din l' tièsse ey sti-là! » (that one won't have a thing left in his head!)

« Tchêr » (to fall): there's another word that is « tchér » (dear) to my heart… I can still hear my grandmother « tchêr » (fall) on me after I had « cabûchî » (bruised) the « preûnes » (plums)… and I laughed up my « cabûche » – sorry, my « capuche » (hood) – at that expression.

« Pôvé vôz amûser d' mî » (you can laugh at me), but « qué vôlez don? » (what do you expect?) « On n'cause pû wallon asteur, on n'sait nîn comment s'qui fô s'crire ce bazar! » (nobody speaks Walloon now; we don't know how to spell the thing!)

But we « berdelle » (babble), we « berdelle », we « pestelle » (dither), we go round and round « toudî » (forever), like a « baudet din s'pachî » (donkey in its field), but « avû tô ça, on n'trouve cô nin el fond del pania! » (for all that, we still haven't found the bottom of the basket!)

J'finirai bîn par tchoûler ou par brére, mais èm' chène avî què j'va pêter evoye pô d'aller brouter ailleû !

Eunice Delcourt (25.12.1985)
Rue Peignies, 50
1480 Tubize

A « tchvau », a « tcha » or a « tchîn » (a horse, a cat or a dog) are « warmer » words in the Walloon of Charleroi than in that of Braine-le-Comte (« un gvau », « in câ » or « in cîn » – or « in quin »?)

Our mum, who was born in Anderlues, says that over there several kinds of Walloon were mixed together, and that words which normally meant the same thing then took on different strengths of meaning. Her grandfather had explained to her: « **(z)brotchî, sprotchî et spotchî** ». He liked them for their expressiveness.
For example, people said: « sprotché-nî lé pwères en pestèlant pa-dsu testout sen rîn rwétî » (don't squash the pears by trampling all over them without paying attention or looking): you hear the « sprotch » and you « see » the pear burst. With « spoutchî » the sound is softer… But if you picked up an overripe pear and squeezed it in your hand, you said: « l' pwère a tout brochî dîn m' min » (the pear has gone all mushy in my hand, meaning that everything oozes out between your fingers going « pfruut »). The same word was used to say that a man's belly was too big to tuck into his trousers: « s'panse brotchû dé s' marone » (his belly was bulging out of his trousers).
The meaning of « spotchî » is weaker. It can mean « squashed », as in « il a s'té spotchî pa iène voiteure » (he was run over by a car), or « damaged », as in « il a bruchaudé s' cartin èy'asteûre, lè pwères ston spotchî » (he has knocked over his basket and now the pears are bruised). « Spotchî » means squashed but still whole (a « spotchî » egg is still in its shell; a « sprotchî » egg is smashed to pieces…). People also said « Il a s'té pôkî pô tram »: that means being hit, knocked down. You can get « én pok d'sus tiesse »: a bump or a knock on the head. It is also said of people who are a bit cracked.
For « to look », people said: « er'wét doula! » (look over there: looking into the distance) / « r'louk in pô douci » (look here a moment; pay attention to what is going on here) / « raguîde es'qui passe » or « ravîse in cû » (look closely and take it in).
Our grandmother says that French cannot convey the full meaning of many Walloon words: that is what gives them their flavour!

Our grandfather on our father's side uses the word « combia » for a thick rope (like the ones for holding bales on a cart) and the word « kewette » for a thin cord (a baling cord). But there can be « gros combias » and « grôs » or « fèn kewettes »: the trouble is that « on n'sé nî d'tro comin scrîre tout ça » (we don't rightly know how all that should be written!)

Jean and Jérémie Delcourt (13.12.91 and 26.12.89)
Rue Peignies, 50
1480 Tubize

To say that someone is fearful, you could say that he « a peû » (is afraid) or that « c'est in peureû » (he's a coward), but Walloons prefer to say: « C'est in couyon!! », as opposed to the word « couyeû »: a stallion, which is spirited and bold!
« Couyon » gave us « couyonner » (someone), that is, to get the better of someone by trickery; so the person has been « couyonné »: duped, short-changed, taken in or robbed…
By extension we have « couyonnade »: « N'dalé nî crwère à tout cès couyonnades drolà! » translates as: « Don't go believing all that nonsense made up to catch you out! » or: « Don't let yourself be fooled by all those stories! »

There are some strange words in Walloon…
For example: « in stûve » or « ène biesse » look like the English « stove » and « beast »
« Escoupe » (spade) looks like « scoop » in English and almost like « schop » or « schippe » (shovel in Flemish and in German), but a spade is « spade » in English and in Dutch, « Spaten » in German… and for a shovel, in Walloon, you say « palot »!
« Scaule » or « escaye, escaille » (ladder) seem to come from the Latin « scalae » and become « scale », « schaal », « skala » in the Germanic languages, as scales of size or colour… It would seem, here, that the Anglo-Saxons took some Walloon or Old French into their languages.
On the other hand, with words like « staule » or « scole », you can only think of Roman times:
« stabulum » (cowshed) becomes « staule », « stal » (Du.), « Stall » (Ger.), « stable » (Eng.; in Walloon you would say « lé staule dè gvaux »)
« Schola » becomes « scole » in Walloon, « school » in English, « school » in Flemish, « Schule » in German, « scoală » in Romanian, « escuela » in Spanish, « école » in French, and I'm forgetting some… They really did go everywhere, those Romans… unless it was Charlemagne who carried this word throughout his empire?
In any case, all this brings us closer to other languages and other peoples, and all of a sudden you feel very European!

Josias Delcourt
Rue Peignies, 50, 1480 Tubize

My name is François DELPLANQUE, I am 14 and I live at 403 rue de la Gare in 7742 Hérinnes (Pecq). I interviewed my grandfather on my mother's side. He is 79 and always spoke the Hérinnes patois (the Picard of the Tournai/Mouscron area) with his parents. Here are the words he chose:

1) Des **éplin.nures**: in English, wood shavings from a plane or an electric planer.
   It is a word he used often, because he was a joiner, and so was his dad. He loved the smell of the « éplin.nures » in his workshop. He had made a wooden bin to keep them in. Since he kept a pig (a « pourchéôw »), he used the « éplin.nures » to smoke the hams outdoors in a big iron barrel. Apparently it smelled good!
2) L' **panche**: the belly.
   My grandfather often says: « èm' néôm', i rit plin s' panche! » Literally that means: « this man, he laughs his belly full », so « he laughs heartily ». He remembers someone of his parents' generation who was very fat and had been nicknamed « panchoute ». Luckily, that person never found out. He himself believed for a long time that it was the man's real name!
3) **Érié (d' coupichûres)**: itched by, irritated by (itching all over).
   It brings back memories of his primary school. In Hérinnes, some people have the surname « Herrier ». At school, their classmates made easy puns: to tease them, they shouted in the playground: « Herrier! Herrier! Érié d' coupichûres! ». Which of course made the children concerned angry, to the great delight of the others!
4) Des **blankries**: a word that is hard to translate; it means anything sweet made for dessert, for example custards, flans, macaroni « à l' castonade » (with brown sugar), « coules de Suisse » (Swiss buns: balls of bread dough cooked in boiling water and eaten drizzled with melted butter and brown sugar)…
   My grandfather loved it when his mum made « blankries », because they were sweet and he liked sugar. She made lots of them « à l'ducasse » (on the day of the village fair; there were two: one in May and one in September). He particularly remembers

the « coules de Suisse » that he sometimes ate on Fridays instead of fish or eggs, since you weren't allowed to eat meat on that day. Now he never eats them any more, and young people don't like the taste because they find it bland.

5) Un **marichéôw**: a blacksmith, or a kind of black beetle. A long time ago, my grandmother had made some broth and had put the pot, uncovered, in the cellar to cool, outside the larder because it was too tall. In the evening she heated up a plate of this broth for my grandfather. Unfortunately, down in the cellar, a « marichéôw » had fallen into the pan. It was hidden among the vegetables, and when my grandfather started eating he suddenly crunched on something strange. It was the « marichéôw »! He spat it out into the sink. He said it tasted a bit sweet. But he didn't drink the rest of the « marichéôw » broth!

This is the end of the summary of my little « interview ». I hope you found it interesting. Thank you for reading!

François.

Hello! My name is Guillaume DELPLANQUE and I am 11.
My address is 403 rue de la Gare, 7742 Hérinnes (Pecq).

I asked my mum some questions. She is 45. She never spoke patois when she was little, because girls weren't allowed to. But she heard her grandparents and her dad speak it all through her childhood, and that is how she still knows the Hérinnes patois (the Picard of Tournai/Mouscron). She chose the following words:

1. **Gâte/maguète**: goat.
   A friend of Mum's from primary school, Christine, had an odd laugh. She had « a « goat's laugh » ». Since she lived on a farm, people teased her by saying she was imitating her goats. When Mum hears a goat bleating, she still thinks of her, 35 years later! And she wonders, with a smile: « is that a « gâte », or is it Christine? »
2. Un **brand'leo**: a roller used to firm down the soil in the fields.
3. Behind her house there was a farm. The farmer never learned to speak French in his whole life: patois was his only language. He lived and worked the old way: he never had a tractor. In spring she often saw him go by with his plough horses pulling a big « brand'leo ». She loved the noise the roller made on the sandstone cobbles of her street. As soon as she heard it coming, she ran to the gate to watch it go past: « V'là l'brand'léo d'Henri! » (that was the man's name). It has to be said that it wasn't hard to spot: on top of the normal noise, the « brand'léo » « screamed » because it wasn't greased. That didn't bother him: he never oiled it, and the roller always went groaning down the street that led to the fields!
4. Un **cous**: a rather naive man, someone people talk about with a laugh…
   Mum visits a cousin of her dad's from time to time. This lady always speaks French, but now and then she slips patois words into what she says. One of them is « cous ». Mum noticed that she used it only when she was talking about someone with humour, especially to hint that he is a bit naive, or does things that other people laugh at without his knowing. For example: « ia éteu vu, l'cous! S' matante il

est mort' et i n'a rin eu! » (he got caught out, the « cous ». His aunt died and he got nothing). Mum often wondered what it meant. Leafing through a dictionary of Old French, she discovered that the word had once existed with the meaning of « cuckold ». Since then she has known why it has what she calls a « connotation » of naivety and irony!

5. **Po d' chûque**: beans (literally: sugar peas).
When her dad was gardening, he said he was going to « s'meu (sow) lès po d' chûque », for example « po d'chûqu' à véôle » (runner beans). And she would watch him put the beans in the « riches » (the furrows in a garden). Her mum, who never spoke patois, called this vegetable « haricots » when she cooked it. So Mum thought that while they were in the ground they were called « po d' chûque », and when you ate them they turned into « haricots »!
6. Lès **rîpes**: a mysterious and serious illness.
My mum has always been a bit of a softie, and that's not about to change! Even when she was little she complained about nothing at all, but she was scared of the doctor! She would go and show her mum a finger, a knee, an arm… with a « bruise » or a tiny scratch. In those cases my grandmother didn't take her seriously, and when Mum asked anxiously what « illness » she had, my grandmother always answered: « That? That's « lès rîpes »! Nobody really knows what it is, but… when you've got it, three days later you're dead! » When she heard that answer, my mum got cross because she knew they were making fun of her… If she still insisted on knowing what « lès rîpes » really was, her mum put on a mysterious, horrified look to show just how serious the situation was, but said nothing! I don't speak patois, but I know that word well because… when one of my brothers or I have an ache that our mum thinks is imaginary or not serious, she tells us we have « lès rîpes ». And that makes us cross in our turn!

There! I hope you had a bit of fun reading this.
So that was the patois of Hérinnes-lez-Pecq. Goodbye!

Guillaume Delplanque

We're not even very good at French, let alone Walloon!
Yet every now and then our granny says to us « qu'au c' que cha ve dire? » (what does that mean?) and laughs at our faces; to us, it's double Dutch…
She found us the five Walloon words that we are going to try to explain as best we can. Her favourite word is surely « l'iau e **destombée** », which means the chill has been taken off the water (neither ice-cold nor lukewarm).
Water again… Her uncle always used to say « l'iau d' no puch e bonne mais elle a ê goût d'**marache** » (our well water is good but it tastes of the marsh)
During her holidays, Granny went « **muchner** » (gleaning – it was the war) and in the evening « allait à l'**ékrienne** » (went to spend the evening) at friends' houses, not without having « **erchiné** » (had a snack) at 4 o'clock.
Now she makes us delicious « **à l' condwève** » tarts (a light pastry) with cherries.

Sébastien Deramaix
9 June 1989

Céline Deramaix
5 October 1993

Jan de Trochstraat, 40
1703 Schepdaal

Granny's note…

My husband, a teacher of 3 Germanic languages, spoke Walloon at home.
He always said that if our young people spoke more Walloon, they would have no trouble with the subjunctive, which is always used in Walloon: « il aro fallu qu'ils v'nissent » (they would have had to come)
But it is 20 years now since he « e dallé » (went away), to paradise, surely surrounded by a flight of the pigeons (*coulons*) he loved so much.

A. Liétard

On this rainy, chilly Sunday, my grandparents and a couple who are friends of my parents met to savour old memories of the days when, as children, they spoke Walloon.

My grandparents come from Heppignies (near Fleurus); they are 75. The friends come from Virginal; they are 65. That is why the same word will sometimes have two pronunciations.
At first everyone was looking for an original word, then little by little the good times of their youth came back to the surface… and it is the words linked to those moments that I have chosen.

- Everyone remembers the « spo » (nicknames) – not always very kind – given to certain inhabitants: there was « li chiau » (no need to translate), « li couillu » (he owned a stallion that he led from farm to farm to cover the mares), « li scran » (apparently he was always tired).
- Then comes the memory of « mêchner » (gleaning), which they did with their grandparents. They picked up the ears of corn left behind by the reapers, their legs pricked by the « steuls » (stubble), while the « kwarbau » (crows) and the « sprauw » or « sprohon » (starlings) waited their turn. Grandmother took bread and « vitoulets » (meatballs) along for a snack
- The women remember housework with the « coquemoire » or « cotemare » (the kettle), the « raft » (scraper) and the washing that had to be « stoûrt » (wrung out) by hand.
- The men think of the good times at the « ducasses » (village fairs) with the swings to « si berlondji » (swing on), and where, with a piece of lead pipe filled with water and stopped at one end with a thumb, they « spittaient » or « spitchaient » (splashed) the girls going by before they « peter evoÿ » (ran off fast).

These two hours together with our elders were very pleasant for me as I listened, and even more so for them, as they could forget their aching backs or legs for a while and plunge back into the life of long ago.

One question remained unanswered: my grandmother remembers that her own grandmother, when she had hurt herself and someone told her to disinfect the wound properly, would reply: « ça n'est né necessaire, ji su stettie ». My grandmother is still looking for the meaning and the translation. If you have an answer…

Clémence Flemal – age 16
44, Chemin Planche Quévit
1430 Rebecq

I am 13. Here is how I did it.
I sorted through dictionaries with my dad. First we gathered 41 words, which I am writing down for you.

Djon.nète: teenage girl. Tayons: ancestors. Rachoner: to assemble. L'èstwèlî: the sky. Pikète du djôu: dawn. Brotchî: to gush. Cacâye: knick-knack. Cokwâr: kettle. Fé bèrwète: to fail. Cayute: hut. Pane di vêre: bald. Coulote: trickle of water. Clignète: wink. Bièsse à bon Dieu: ladybird. Pèter èvôye: to clear off. Stron.ner: to devour. Skèpî: to hatch. Spirou: squirrel. Pèlate: peel. Flotche: mistake. Vikérîye: existence. Bètchète: tip, end. Crâye: crack. Stocasse: solid. Bustokî: to celebrate. Cafougnî: to crumple. Tchamousser: to spoil. Cruwaus: weeds. Binauje: happy. Fachète: nappy. Buwéye: washing. Bawète: skylight. Bribeû: beggar. Ouyeû: miner. Boukèt: piece. Brichauder: to knock over. Dringuyèe: tip (money). Pourcha singlè: wild boar. Stocasse: vigorous.

Then I had to choose. My dad read them to me; some of them I had already heard, and I chose these five:

Brotchî: to gush
Cacâye: knick-knacks, little things, sometimes useless
Vikérîye: existence
Bawète: skylight
Brichauder: to knock over

Benjamin Goffart
Born 5.6.90
Rue Destrée, 108
6043 Ransart

Saying:

Bon d' jou. Boun année.	*(Good day. Happy New Year.*
Em poch est trawée.	*My pocket has a hole in it.*
I m' faurou in p'ti boun an	*I could do with a little New Year's gift*
Pou' met' pa' d' vant!!!	*To put in front of it!!!)*

My grandmother told me that when she was a little girl, on New Year's Day she would go to her grandparents' and to her godfather's and godmother's, and on that occasion recite to them the « compliment » for the day! Of course, she was hoping for lots of coins to put in front of the hole in her pocket!
I think it's still a great saying today!

Happy New Year!!
Maximilien

Maximilien Harpigny
Born 30.8.93
Rue Landuyt, 21
1140 Braine-le-Château

Five Walloon words: Georges Darmont Prize
To Marine and Sylvain (1) (age 10)

Here are five words from my old Walloon speech, which, alongside French, « from the depths of time », also comes from Latin.
Words I love because you can taste them in your mouth, and several of them differ from French, which clearly shows that Walloon is not « sub-French » or bad French.

1. (l) **awous** (or **awout**): means the harvest, and so, for us, the month of August, and 15 August, the high point of summer and a great feast in the Liège region in memory of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.
   In the old days, daily life depended very much on the seasons; for example, you couldn't find oranges and lemons in winter!
   So in this word « awous » we have at the same time:
   - men's work for the harvest
   - the eighth month of the year
   - a great social and religious feast

   What's more, in Walloon the « w » is sometimes very strongly pronounced, especially at the start of a word, as in « Wallonie » or « Brabant wallon », whereas, as you will have noticed, in France the « w » is pronounced like a « v ».
2. **carpê**: means a carpling, that is, a very small carp. This lively little fish gave its name to the mischievous, boisterous but good-natured child; so a *carpê* is also a little rascal, a boy or girl who is a bit of a « devil ».
   (For a small child who is still sweet, you say « poyon », which means chick).
3. **cramignoler (or cramignoner)**: to dance *cramignons*, that is, farandoles in which many people hold hands and wind along to a song with a special rhythm.
   You should always look behind words; I don't know where this one comes from, but « crâ » means *fat* in Walloon.

(1) As they are twins, I can't address just one of them!

4. **haper**: to seize (*rehaper*: to seize again), to grab quickly, the way you snatch, for fun, what someone else has in their hand!
   I chose this word because of the « h » in Liège Walloon, which is often very strongly aspirated, as if there were three of them to pronounce! In our village they called my mum « Madame HHHumblet », drawing the breath up from the bottom of their lungs! That was a sure way not to get the liaisons wrong in French: you say « des haricots », not like « des_asticots »!
   Alas, French is getting poorer, and little by little even radio and television journalists no longer make the difference between

   « des Hongrois » and « des_ombrelles » or
   « des haricots » and « des_abricots »,
5. **rawète**: a free extra, something you get on top, for example a sweet that the shopkeeper adds « into the bargain ».

   It's a lovely idea of something given for free.
   It is also used in a family with several children: a baby born long after the other or the others… *In pitite rawète* that comes along just like that, as an extra!

Papé

Note: what I write about the silent or aspirated « h » and about the « w » shows that Walloon has sounds (they are called phonemes) that differ from French or don't exist in French; that is more or less true of every language compared with others. So Walloon was able to help me with pronunciation in English or in Dutch, and could have helped with Spanish and Arabic. Good language teachers make children understand this well.

1. **Bondjou tourtou**
   Hello everyone (people often greet everybody)
2. **Mon bin amé**
   My good mate (my good friend)
3. **Bon voyadje tchu nous**
   Have a good trip to our place
4. **Kouma k'va ?**
   How are you?
5. **Vins avu mi proum'né da l'village**
   Come for a walk with me in the village

It was my grandfather who taught it to my father, and he passed it on to me.

Marie Incourt, age 12
59, avenue Jean de Bologne
1020 Bruxelles

This is how my great-grandfather spoke:

Dj'èm sovin

Dèm pètit **viadje** avu sès mâjons to lon des routes, des p'tites **cinses,** quéq pu groce. Lè gins todi à l'ouvradje : des bièsses a sognè, des tchamps a tchèrwè, hirpè, samè è pu fâchè é rintrè l' fwin è les grin. Sastè si bé a veye ! Lè gins déjin bondjou su gintimin « éboujou, Fernand, sa va lè fwin ? » « è vo, Firmin, v'salè bin ? fé chou a nut ! » On s' rétrové a l'églije, o p'tit magasin. On fiesté la **dicâce**. On s' rètrouvé a **l'sise.**
Sasté l'bé tin !

Rossignon Alexandre
age 15
10, rue Gustave Laforge
5020 Champion

RECITAL OF WALLOON POETRY

A.R.E.W.

Maison de la Francité
22 April 2003

PROGRAMME

Readers: Aurélie Tayenne, Pierre Henry, Joseph Bodson.
Violinist, choice of accompaniment: Evelaine Cobut.

Joseph Jongen : Légende naïve.
Jean-Denys Boussart: Ci n'èst qu'ine tchanson.
Willy Bal : Avoye.
Louis Remacle: L'air qui djâse.
Albert Maquet : Voyèdje.
Tchaikovsky : Méditation.
Louis Remacle : Bouneûr.
Emile Gilliard : Tournikèt
Franz Dewandelaer: L'aveûle (extract)
Franz Dewandelaer: El Nivèlwès
Willy Chaufoureau: Vî Nivèle
Jean-Sébastien Bach, Sonata, Siciliana.
Roger Foulon : Lès rèstons
Roger Foulon : Qué d'sus binèse
Gabrielle Bernard : Feus d' ranches
Jean Guillaume: Dj'a lèyî tchêr mi coeûr d'èfant
Jean Guillaume: A tauve
Emile Gilliard : C'èst po todis
Joseph Bodson: Li grand blanc meur
Emile Lempereur : Sondje
Willy Bal : Al cache
Jean-Denys Boussart: Dji m' sovin
Maggy Frisée : Viker
César Espejo, Presto

Ci n'èst qu'ine tchanson

Ci n'èst qu'ine tchanson d' prétimps ;
Li tchanson dè rèw èt dè molin ;
On rèspleû qu'ènnè va èt qui r'vint,
Avou l'vint…

Ci n'èst qu'ine tchanson d'osté
Qu'on lét là, à l' passåde dès-ouhès,
Quand l' solo fornåhi s' lét goter
So lès hés…

Poqwè n' pou-djdju roûvî
Li visèdje dè bèrdjî … ?
Quand i m' mostrève lès steûles,
Dj' èsteû come in-aveûle…

C'èst l' tchanson d'årîre-såhon,
Qui s' dispiète quand lès bès djoûs 'nnè vont
Èt qu' lès mwètès-foyes, tot dè long
Vont-st-à lon…
Ci sèrè m' tchanson d'iviér,
Ine tchanson qui m'apwèrtrè l'èspwér
Èle dîrè qui l' solo n'èst nin mwért
Po tofér…

Poqwè vôreû-dj' roûvî
Li visèdje dè bèrdjî… ?
Quand i m' mostréve lès steûles,
Dj'èsteû come in-aveûle…

Ci n'èst qu'ine tchanson d' prétimps
Li tchanson dè rèw èt dè molin ;
On rèspleû qu'ènnè va èt qui r'vint…
Avou l' vint…

Jean-Denys Boussart (Liège)

Translation: It's Only a Song. It's only a song of spring;/ The song of the wheel and the mill;/ A refrain that goes away and comes back,/ With the wind…// It's only a song of summer/ That we leave there, as the birds pass by,/ When the weary sun lets itself slip/ Down over the hillsides…// Why can I not forget/ The shepherd's face…?// When he showed me the stars,/ I was as if blind…

It's the song of late autumn,/ Which wakes when the fine days go away/ And the dead leaves, all along,/ Drift far away…// This will be my winter song,/ A song that will bring me hope;/ It will say that the sun is not dead/ For ever… Why would I want to forget/ The shepherd's face?/ When he showed me the stars/ I was as if blind…/ It's only a song of spring/ The song of the wheel and the mill;/ A refrain that goes away and comes back/ With the wind…

Avoye

Èl tins dès èfants :
rèléye au soya lèvant,
rouséye au soya toquant.

Què lès djoûs sont coûrts !
Què lès djoûs sont longs !

Come èl breune èst longue à tchér
su lès téres à steûles toutes vûdes,
sins co nule èstwèle au cièl !

Târdûwe, èl breune s'alan.mit
su lès bujas d' l' èstè dju.,
qui r'britcheneut come dès souvenances.

Què lès chabots sont pèsants
pou pèstèler l's-èspèrances,
t'au d'dèlong dès vîs tch'mins gris,
qu'i chène tout d'in côp
qu'i n'è vont nule paut !

Willy Bal (Jamioulx)
(*Al'breune dè l'èsté*, Summer Evening, in *Œuvres poétiques wallonnes 1932-1990*, ALWaC and S.L.L.W., 1991)

Translation: On the Way. The time of childhood:/ frost at sunrise,/ dew in the full sun./ How short the days are!/ How long the days are!// How long the evening takes to fall/ on the emptiness of the harvested fields,/ when not a star is shining yet!/ Come late, the evening lingers/ on the stubble of the summer that is over,/ which rises up again like memories// How heavy the clogs are/ for trampling on hopes,/ all along the old grey paths,// which, it suddenly seems,/ must lead nowhere.

L'air qui djâse

Dju loukéve vos-ûs èt v'là qu'on-z-a oy
One aîr, one fène aîr, djâzer èzès foyes.
Vos loukîz mès-ûs, lès foyes ont trèssyi,
Èt nos n' savans nin çou qu' l'aîr nos-a dit…
L'amoûr èt l' bouneûr lûhint d'vins nos coûrs ;
I-gn-aveût d'zeû l' monde lu cî d'on bê djoûr ;
Èt l' solo clign'téve à l' cwène d'one noûlé.
L'air s'a tê on pôk, pwis 'lle a co djâzé,
Tot doû, mais si doû ! come po s' fé comprinde…
Quu sofléve-t-èle là ? Çu n' èsteut noule plainte.
Èle parléve d'amoûr èt d' bouneûr, moutwè ?
Mais poqwè pinsins-n' qu'èle duhéve aute tchwè ?

Louis Remacle, Neuville-Francorchamps
(*Au tchèstè d' poussire*, The Castle
of Dust, 1946)

Translation: The Talking Breeze: I was looking into your eyes, and then we heard/ a breeze, a gentle breeze, talking in the leaves./ You were looking into my eyes, the leaves trembled,/ and we do not know what the breeze told us…/ Love and happiness shone in our souls;/ over the world was the sky of a fine day;/ and the sun was winking at the corner of a cloud./ The breeze fell silent a while, then spoke again,/ so softly, oh so softly! as if to make itself understood…/ What was it sighing? It was no lament./ It was speaking of love and happiness, perhaps?/ But why did we think it was saying something else?

Voyèdje

Li prumîre siteûle qu'i vèya so s' vôye – i scrîha s' no d' sus come so dèl poussîre. C'èst d' ça qu'i wârda à l' bètchète dè deût, on tot p'tit pô dèl loumîre…

Li deûzinme siteûle qu'i vèya so s' vôye – i s' mèta d'vant lèye po l' loukî pus fwért. Elle èsteût si bleûve qu'on-z-areût dit l' mér à l' pus tchaude vèsprêye d'osté…

Li treûzinme siteûle qu'i vèya so s' vôye – i lî sonla ôre come on tchant si doûs qu'i s'arèsta 'ne gote po poleûr hoûter. Pus rin n' motiha, èt i s' diva dire qu'i s'aveût bin sûr trompé…

Li qwatrinme siteûle qu'i vèya so s' vôye – i s' sinta tot seû, mièrseû è steûlî, èt i s'dimanda, sins poleûr rèsponde, s'il ariv'reût mây on djoû…

Li cinquinme siteûle qu'i vèya so s'vôye – i lî vola dîre çou qui s' coûr qwèréve, mins lèye, di n' poleûr djåser come lu l' féve, distinda bin doûç'mint…

Li sîhinme siteûle qu'i vèya so s' vôye – i n'aveût pus l' fwèce dè roter pus lon èt i touma là, li visèdje è tére, tot t'nant s'coûr divins sès mains…

Li sètinme siteûle å coron di s' vôye – li sètinme siteûle n'a mây rin sèpou. Lèye qu'il a qwèrou pace qu'èlle èsteût l' djôye èt l' pus grand boneûr qui s' pôye…

Albert Maquet, Liège
(*Djoû d'apèles*, Game of Bird-Calls, 1947)

Translation. Journey. The first star he saw on his way — he wrote his name on it as if in dust. That is why he kept a tiny bit of light on the tip of his finger…

The second star he saw on his way — he stood in front of it to gaze at it harder. It was so blue you would have thought it was the sea on the warmest summer evening…

The third star he saw on his way — he seemed to hear something like a song, so sweet that he stopped for a moment to listen to it. Nothing stirred any more, and he had to tell himself that he must surely have been mistaken…

The fourth star he saw on his way — he felt alone, utterly alone in the sky, and he wondered, unable to answer, whether he would ever arrive.

The fifth star he saw on his way — he wanted to tell it what his heart was seeking, but the star, unable to speak in his language, very gently went out…

The sixth star he saw on his way — he no longer had the strength to go any further, and he fell there, face to the ground, holding his heart in the hollow of his hands…

The seventh star at the end of his way — the seventh star never knew anything. She whom he sought because she was joy, the greatest happiness of all…

Bouneûr

Lu vikante suteûle dès-autes djoûrs
Aveut ridé foû du m' fignèsse.

Lu spèheur, come one loûde broheûr,
Aveut èdwèrmi mès papîres.

Èt v'là dès vwès, dès djônès vwès,
Dès clérès vwès come dès hîyètes,

Qu'ont monté èt qui m'ont tchanté
Tot l' bouneûr quu dj' rawârdéve îr.

Èt dj'a moussi, tot bê doûç'mint,
Èt l'vî mâhon à lâdjès-ouh.

Mais d'on côp dju n' lès-a pus oy,
Èt lès murs èstint blancs d' loumîre.

Louis Remacle, Neuville-Francorchamps
(*Au tchèstè d' poûssire*, The Castle of Dust, 1948)

Translation: Happiness. The living star of other days/ had slipped from my window.// Shadow, like a heavy mist,/ had sent my eyelids to sleep.// And here are voices, young voices// voices as clear as cowbells,// which rose up and sang to me/ all the happiness I had waited for the day before.// And I went in, very gently,/ into the old house with the wide doors.// But suddenly I could hear them no more,/ and the walls were white with light.

(The Castle of Dust)

Toûrnikèt

Li cia qui r'vêrè po d' bon
Dès payis di d' pa-drî l' baurîre,
S'il a d'dja rapicî s' baston,
I n'a nén co raploû po l' dire.

Èt l' toûrnikèt toûne èt catoûne
Èt nos zouplans su lès tch'faus d' bwès.

Li cia qui dwèt riv'nu d'au lon,
Fauréve valu qu'i trouve one pîre
Po si r'pwazer, s' polu achîr
A s't-auje au mitan d' sès soçons.

Mins l' toûrnikèt toûne èt catoûne
Èt quî ce qui sondje à dire poqwè ?

Emile Gilliard, Moustier-sur-Sambre
(*Rukes di tëre* — Clods of Earth, 1966)

Translation. Merry-Go-Round. He who will come back for good/ From the lands on the other side of the barrier,/ if he has already taken up his stick,/ has not yet arrived to tell of it.// And the merry-go-round turns and turns/ and we leap onto the wooden horses// He who must come back from afar,/ he really ought to find a stone/ to rest on, to be able to sit/ at his ease among his companions.// But the merry-go-round turns and turns/ and who thinks to ask why?

L'aveûle (extraits)

In ratindant, l' vint tchét pus fris',
Èl pieuve pièrd tous sès tch'feûs d'ârtisse
Qui f'zont dès croles dins lès flaches d'iau…

Yè l'aveûle, yuçe qu'èlle èst ? Lauvau ?

« …S'èle vît par ci, dj' âré trop pau
Si d'dwè li doner tout ç què d' pinse,
Mais s'n-ér jwèyeûs s'ra m' n-èrcompinse
Pou l' wére què djè ll'âré gâté. »
……..
Djè n' li-z-é jamais rî doné…

Èle a r'passé,
Lès pîds pa d'vant, dèdins 'ne civiére,
A ç' què lès cyins qu'ont dès priyères
Èlz-invoyin' à leû Bon Dieu !
I n'avout co jamais tant pieu,
D'ssus nos misêres…

(Èl pieuve qui trawe come claus d'aci
Dèskindot co, toudi, toudi,
Pa lonkès lignes yèt pa fins plis
Dèssus no têre)

Èlle è-st-au trau dès mau-tchaussis,
Avè s'chabraque tout rassârci,
Avè s' cote qui n'èst pus qu'in pli,
L'aveûle.

(Èle pieuve coupe come in tchamp d'èsteûles…)

Èlle èst vôye in taustant là…ci…
L' cayô du tch'min du paradis,
Dins l' pieuve qui r'late, dins l' vint qui rit,
- Qui brêt, qui miâwe, qui tchante, qui r'beûle –
- L'aveûle !

Franz Dewandelaer, Nivelles (1938)

Translation — The Blind Woman.

While we wait, the wind falls colder,/ The rain loses all its artist's hair/ That curls in the puddles of water…// And the blind woman, where is she? Over there?// « If she comes this way, I'll have too little/ If I must give her all I'd like to/ But her joyful look will be my reward/ For the little I'll have spoiled her with »… I never gave her anything…// She came by again,/ Feet first, on a stretcher/ while those who have prayers/ Sent them up to their Good Lord!/ It had never rained so much,/ On our miseries…// The rain that pierces like steel nails/ Was still coming down, always, always,/ In long lines, in close folds/ upon our world// She is in the hole of the poorly shod/ With her shawl all darned,/ Her skirt that is now just a single fold/ The blind woman// (The rain cuts like stubble)…// She has gone, groping this way, groping that/ The cobbles of the road to paradise/ In the lashing rain, in the laughing wind,/ – That weeps, that mews, that sings, that bellows –/ The blind woman!

Èl Nivèlwès

I

Chacun d'ssus l' têre a sès dèfauts :
Yun bwèt, yun chique èyèt l'aute tchante.
Mains pou trouver l'ome come i faut,
Come in bia pun au fond d'ène mande,
I n' faut nî daler si lon qu' ça.
Wétîz t't-alintoûr dè vous-autes
Yèt n' courez nî 'squ'à Cunaxa.
L' Bon Dieu tout près d' vous din brichôde.
Non ! L'ome di chwès dès omes di chwès
L'ome què dvû dire, l'ome sins manière
L' mèyeû dès-omes dè d'ssus l' têre,
Èn' cachîz nî, c'èst l' Nivèlwès.

II

L' Nivèlwès, c'èst pîre qu'in chameau
Djè l' sé bî, pusquè d' vos in pâle.
Quand o lu mousse in d'mi vêre d'iau,
C'èst come s'i rinconte in vèrt diâle.
Mains s'i s'ajit d'in d'mi gueuze, là,
Faut l'intinde dîre come lès djins riches :
« Hum, èl gueûzerîye du p'tit Colas
A l'gout d'trop pô...Qu'on lès rimpliche ! »
Sutout n' li disez nî qu'i bwèt !
« D' timps in timps, waye, pou passer 'ne zine. »
Mains s'i r'vont soûs d'lé Léyontine,
I n' sont nî plins, lès Nivèlwès.

III

Èl Nivèlwès n' a qu' in dèfaut,
A part lès cyins què d' vî d' vos dire.
S'i vwèt 'ne puce, i dit : « Qué bia tch'fau ! »
S'i vwèt in tch'fau, c'èst co pus pîre.
L' Nivèlwès n' sè tét nî souvint.
I n' mint jamés...sauf quand i pâle.
Yèt si vos f'zez long come vo main,
Li stindra ça...djusqu'à vo spale.
Lès galants d'in savont 'ne saquè.

Yèt dins ç' monde-ci pus nwêr què d' l'anke,
I n'aroût pus poun d' monvéche langue,
Si n'avoût nî…lès Nivèlwès.

Translation – The Nivellois

I.
Everyone on earth has their faults:
One drinks, one chews tobacco and another sings.
But to find a proper man,
Like a fine apple at the bottom of a basket,
You don't need to go that far.
Look all around you
And don't run all the way to Cunaxa.
The Good Lord squanders them right next to you.
No! The man I'm talking about, the man without airs,
The best of men on earth,
Look no further, it's the Nivellois.
II.
The Nivellois is worse than a camel,
I know it well, since I'm telling you about him.
When you show him half a glass of water,
It's as if he'd met a green devil.
But if it's half a pint of gueuze, well,
You should hear him talk like rich folk:
« Hm, little Colas's gueuze
Leaves you wanting more… Fill them up! »
Above all, don't tell him he drinks!
« Now and then, yes, to pass a whim. »
But if they go home drunk to Léontine,
They're not full, the Nivellois.
III.
The Nivellois has only one fault,
Apart from the ones I've just told you.
If he sees a flea, he says « what a fine horse! »
If he sees a horse, it's even worse.
The Nivellois isn't often quiet.
He never lies. Except when he speaks.
And if you show something as long as your hand,
He'll stretch it… right up to your shoulder.
Sweethearts know something about that.
And in this world, blacker than ink,
There would be no more wicked tongues,
If it weren't for… the Nivellois!
This is the text of a song by Franz Dewandelaer entitled *Chant de l'Aclot*, taken from the revue *Pus bia qu'Nivelles* (1929)

Vî Nivèle

Dj'ador' èm vî Nivèle, ès clokî, ès Dodin.ne,
Ses mézos dè d' dins 'l timps qu'ont ieûs leûs mur' tchamoussîs
Avè leû gris pègnon yè dès uch' dè bo d' tchin.ne
Què l'pus foûrte dès apiètes nè sâroût dèstchaussî

Souvint, quand i fét bia, d'lé in richot qui trin.ne
Au mitan d 'in boskèt djè va voltî rèver.
Djè sûs loyî à 'm vile come pal pus spèsse dès tchin.nes
Nivèle c' est toute èm vîye, à yèle djè m'sins rivé.

Vos m' dèmandez poukè ? djè n'sâroûs vos rèsponde,
Djè vwès voltî 'm Nivèle paskè dj'sûs in Aclot
Yè qu'c'est là qu'dj'ai troté quand dj'n'astoûs qu'in gavio.

Yè cor bi^{n} minme djè sroûs dè l'aute costé du monde
Quand dvènu vî stala djè m'sintirai mori,
Al plène course pou Nivèle vos m'vîrez racouri !

Willy Chaufoureau, Nivelles, 1950
(Extract from the anthology « Éne
kèrtinéye de fleûrs », A Basket of Flowers)

Translation: Old Nivelles. I adore my old Nivelles, its bell tower, its Dodaine,/ Its houses of long ago whose walls have gone mouldy/ With their grey gables and their oak doors/ That the strongest axe could not break down// Often, when the weather is fine, by a winding stream/ In the middle of a grove I love to go and dream/ I am bound to my town as by the heaviest of chains/ Nivelles is my whole life, I feel riveted to it// You ask me why? I could not tell you,/ I love Nivelles because I am an Aclot/ And because that's where I ran about when I was just a lad// And even if I were at the other end of the world/ When, grown old and grey, I feel that I am dying/ You will see me come running full tilt to Nivelles!

Lès rèstons

Qué dalâdje, c'èst Mardi gras ! Êve cût dès rèstons.
Èl mèt in boukèt d' bûre dins s' payèle. Ça chîle.
A ç'te heure, i fôt pûjî èt clitchî 'ne loue dè pâte.
Ça chite, ça cût à gros bouyons, èt ça sint bon.
Més l' pus dûr è-st-a v'ni. Stièrde sès mins a s'èscoû.
Apicer l' manche, skeûre èl payèle èt lancer wôt
L'rèston tout rond. On direut in solèy pindu
Intrè l' drèsse èt l'èstûve. Èt i r'tchét plakèzak
A l'inviérs, dins l' payèle. Êve èst binése. Adam
Èt lèy vont mindjî ça aveu dèl cassonâde
Èt du cafè tout djusse passè. Yun pa yun, lès solèys
R'lûj'tè come dè l'oûr su l' plate assiète du boneûr.

Roger Foulon, Thuin
Êve èt Adam, Èl bourdon, Charleroi, 2003

Translation: What a to-do, it's Shrove Tuesday! Eve is making pancakes. She puts a knob of butter in the pan. It sizzles. Now she has to scoop up and pour a ladleful of batter. It runs, it cooks, bubbling hard, and it smells good. But the hardest part is still to come. Wipe her hands on her apron, grab the handle, shake the pan and toss the round pancake high. It looks like a sun hanging between the dresser and the stove. And it drops back down with a smack, upside down, into the pan. Eve is happy. She and Adam are going to eat them with brown sugar and freshly brewed coffee. One by one, the suns shine like gold on the flat plate of happiness.

Qué d' sû binése

Qué d' sû binése dè yèsse a costè d' vous,
Si tène èt toute triyanante dè boneûr.
Sèréz m' foûrt, co pus foûrt, què d' sinte vo keûr
Bate come in rigodon èl djoû d' sint Roch.
N' boudjons pus. Èl nût èst là. N' disez rén.
Lès-anjes ariv'té nos riv'ter d' leûs-éles
Èt lès dèrnérs mouchons tchant'tè pour nous.
Vo visâdje è-st-adôbouzè dè stwèles;
Lès deûs pus bèles sont vos-îs plins d'amoûr.

Roger Foulon , Thuin
(id., ibid.)

Translation: How happy I am to be beside you/ So frail and all trembling with happiness/ Hold me tight, tighter still, so that I feel your heart/ Beating like a drum tune on Saint Roch's day/ Let's not move. Night is here. Say nothing./ The angels come and brush us with their wings/ And the last birds are singing for us./ Your face is smeared with stars;/ The two most beautiful are your eyes full of love.

Feus d' ranches

Au fond dè djardéns, au d'dilong dès têres,
Dèviès l' fin d' sèptimbe, on lès vwèt blameter,
Èt dji r'waite voltî leûs blankès fumêres
Qui sont come lès twatches dè l'mwârt di l'èsté.

Lès-èfants pwatenut totes sôrtes di ram'chis',
Dès vîs rabins d'aye, ou bén dès favas,
Èt dès fleûrs sètchîyes, dès strins, dès ronchis'...
C'è-st-au cia qu'ârè l' pus bia dès fornias !

Tot ç' qui, d'zo l' solia, fieûve li glwêre do monde,
Frîle en s' cotwartchant dins lès grifes do feu,
Qui copète, catoûne, co.agne èt s' rènonde,
Autoû dès sètcheûs grûlant come on leup !

Li fumêre, mwints côps, rabat, pique lès-ouys.
L'air sint d'dja l'uviêr ; i tchaît dè l' creuweû,
I passe on vint fris' qui done li tchau d' pouye,
On sondje aux mwaîs djoûs, si coûts, si grigneûs...

Èt portant, d' jin.me bin, po vôy lès stindéyes
Dès têres dispouyîes èt dès p'tits cortis
Où c' qui lès feus d' ranches mèt'nut leus blametéyes,
Di griper su l' tiène, quand l' vièspréye finit.

Dji m' dimande, adon : quand nosse vète djon.nèsse
A pièrdu sès fleûrs, flanîyes pa lès-ans,
A qwè bon aurder l' sovenance di s' promèsse,
Ram'chis qui sètchit en nos disbautchant ?

Dèbris où ç' qui l' keûr cache sès vîyès nanches,
Bias-èspwérs sins sûte, amoûrs disfloris ?
Mins qu'èst ç' qu'a l' coradje di fé on feu d' ranches
Dès chérès fènasses dès bouquèts d'avri ?

Qu'èst ç' qui sâreûve bin, au sou dè l' vîyèsse,
Brûler l' fleûr sins seûve où ç' qu'on rvwèt l' vî timps,
Sèpant bin qu' l'uviêr qui man'cîye nosse tièsse
N'amwin.ne nin, à s' sûte, on novia prétimps ?

Aurdans nos sovenîrs flanis, sins no plinde,
Si no lès brûlerén' nosse keûr rafrèdi
Îreuve co, bén sûr, rimouwer leus cindes,
Po r'trouver one breûje…èt p'lu s'î r'chandi.

Gabrielle Bernard
Moustier/sur/Sambre
(extract from the Cahiers wallons)

Translation: Haulm Fires: All along the gardens, all along the fields/ Toward the end of September, you see them glowing,/ and I love to watch their white smoke/ Which is like the torches of summer's end// The children bring all sorts of rubbish,/ Old hedge wood, or bean stalks,/ And dried flowers, hay, brambles…/ Whoever has the finest bonfire wins!// All that, under the sun, was the glory of the world,/ Hisses as it writhes in the claws of the fire,/ Which crackles, roars, bites and leaps up again,/ Around the debris, howling like a wolf!// The smoke, at times, blows back and stings the eyes/ The air already smells of winter; damp is falling/ A cold wind passes that gives you goose flesh,/ You think of the bad days, so short, so gloomy…/ And yet I like, to see the expanse/ Of bare fields and little gardens/ Where the haulm fires scatter their sparks,/ To climb the hill (*tienne*), as the evening ends.// Then I wonder: when our green youth/ Has lost its flowers, faded by the years/ What use is it to keep the memory of its promise,/ Twigs that wither to our sorrow?// Who could, on the threshold of old age,/ Burn the sapless flower in which we see old times again/ Knowing all the while that the winter threatening our heads/ Brings no new spring in its wake// Let us keep our withered memories, without complaint// If we burned them, our cooled heart/ Would still, of course, go stirring their ashes/ To find an ember… and be able to warm itself there.

Dj'a lèyî tchêr mi coeûr d'èfant
su l' brîsé
Dès spiyûres dins mès mwins. Vint-ans.
on-auté…

Èt dj'a tot stitchî dins l' tchabote
d'on vî tchin.ne
djon.nèsse, bokèts. Faut bin qu'on rote
su sès pwin.nes.

I m' chone portant qui dj' auréve bon
d'aller voûy
s'i n' court nin saquants gotes di m' song
dins lès foûyes.

Jean Guillaume, Fosses-la-ville
(Poèmes wallons, 1948)

Translation: I let my child's heart fall on the road/ Fragments in my hands. Twenty years/ An altar…// And I hid it all in the hollow/ of an old oak/ Youth, griefs. One has to walk on/ Over one's sorrows.// Yet it would be so sweet to me/ to go and see/ whether a few drops of my blood are not running/ in the leaves.

A tauve

Gn-avéve one tchiyère vide à tauve,
Gn-avéve on gris pièle qui couréve sins brût
Su dès massales qui l' feu dès lârmes avéve ricût.
On-z-avèt douviè l'uch dèl cauve...

Mins gn-a ieû pèrson.ne qu' a r'monté.
Quét'fîye qu'il èstèt d'djà trop taurd.
On n' dijéve rin. C' èstéve l'èsté.
C'èstèt l' vièspréye. I-gn-avèt pus rin dins lès tchaurs.

Jean Guillaume
(ibid.)

Translation — At Table. There was an empty chair at the table/ There was a grey pearl running without a sound/ Down cheeks baked by the fire of tears,/ The cellar door had been opened…// But no one came back up./ Perhaps it was already too late./ Nobody said anything./ It was summer./ It was evening. There was nothing left in the carts.

C'èst po todis

C'èst po todis
qu'on-z-a rclawé lès sondjes
dèl vîye maujone
rapérîye pa-d'zos lès faus.

Èt minme qui l'uch
sèréve au laudje
gn-a pus pèrson.ne
qu'î waze mouchî.

Lès jates sul tauve
ont dèdja trop sièrvu
èt lès tchèyêres
sont rafrèdîyes dispûs…

- Intrez todis !

Emile Gilliard (Moustier-sur-Sambre)
Rukes di tëre (1966) (Clods of Earth)

Translation: It's For Ever. It's for ever/ that the dreams/ of the old house have been nailed shut/ under the coolness of the beeches// And even if the door/ had stayed open/ there is no one left/ who would dare go in./ The cups on the table/ have already served too long/ and the chairs// have gone cold since…/ Come in anyway!

Li grand blanc meur

Qu'èst-ce qu'i gn'a
Di l'ôte costé do grand blanc meur
Mwints côps
On-ètind
Rîre èt criyî
Dès bauchèles èt dès gamins
Et mwints côps on n'ètind
Qui do silence
Come s'i gn'avéve rin
Di l'ôte costé do grand blanc meur
On djoû quitfîye nos irans machî nos vîyès vwès
Avou tos cès paujères brûts
On soûrdant qui gruzine one couche qui brûtîye
Èt totes lès ôtès vîyès vwès
Qui chichelot'nut à l' brune
Di l'ôte costé do grand blanc meur.

Joseph Bodson (Soye-Floreffe)
Unpublished

Translation: The Great White Wall. What is there/ On the other side of the great white wall/ Sometimes/ You hear/ Girls and boys/ Laughing and shouting/ And sometimes you hear/ Nothing but silence/ As if there were nothing/ On the other side of the great white wall/ One day perhaps we will go/ and mingle our old voices/ With all those peaceful sounds/ A spring that babbles, a branch that creaks/ And with all the other old voices/ That whisper in the evening/ On the other side of the great white wall.

SONDJE

Il-èst grand tins qui dj'alume li lampe di mémwère. Qui s' lumière fuche doûce come ène mwin d' eûwe dins l'èsté.

Il èst grand tins qui dj' bwève al fontène du tins dès longs djoûs di mès djônès-anéyes.

Dj'é yeû branmint pus d' pacyince qui d'acèrtinance dins l' bos dès frèchôs èt dès caclindjes.

In mièle a tchantè si bé qu'il-a fét s'adrouvi li vwèle dèl niût.

In visâdje a paru, aspoyi conte in bôli. Bladjots tous lès deus.

Li printans è-st-à l'afut, si keûr dins 'ne fleûr qui voyâdje kèrtchîye d'ombes èyèt d' cléreûs.

Dimwin, li cinsî ôra sès preumis rèves di l' èsté, pèsants d' pômes.

Emile Lempereur
(Châtelet – Loverval, extract from *Bourdon*, 2003)

Translation. Dream. It is high time I lit the lamp of memory. May its light be soft as a hand of water in summer./ It is high time I drank at the fountain of the time of the long days of my young years/ I had far more patience than certainty in the wood of marshes and bilberries/ A blackbird sang so well that it made the veil of night open/ A face appeared, leaning against a birch. Both as pale as each other/ Spring is lying in wait, its heart in a flower that travels, laden with shadow and light/ Tomorrow the farmer will have his first dreams of summer, heavy with ears of grain.

Al cache

Fuwant, foûgnî dins l' niût d' toutes lès vwin.nes dè s' mémwère.

Brac'nant, s'acroler dins lès broûs dès frèchaus dè s' mémwère.

Nachant, ranchî t't-avau lès tèstias dou guèrnî dè s' mémwère.

Scolî tchènu, graz'ner lès cindréyes dèl coûr d'èscole dè s' mémwère, après lès mas pièrdus pau gaviot à grands îs.

Scafoter à reuds dwèts, au pachî dè s' mémwère, pou lès eûres èscawnéyes dins l' cruwô dès coûrts djoûs.

Lontins qu'i cache, qu'i nache,
qu'i ranche èt qu'i randache,
l'èfant sondjaud qui potcheut dins lès flaches.

Willy Bal (Jamioulx)
Extract from *Al breune dè l'èsté*, Summer Evening, in *Œuvres poétiques wallonnes*, A.L.WaC-S.L.L.W., 1991.

Translation: Mole, digging in the night of all the veins of his memory/ Prowling, getting stuck in the mud of the marshes of his memory/ Ferreting, stirring up everything in the old junk of his memory// Grey-haired schoolboy, raking the cinders in the playground of his memory, in search of the marbles lost by the wide-eyed boy./ Scratching, with numb fingers, in the meadow of his memory, for the hours scattered in the weeds of days too short/ For a long time now he has been searching, ferreting,/ rummaging and rummaging about,// the dreamy child who used to splash in the puddles.

Dji m' sovin

I

Dji m' sovin
Qu'in-èfant à coron dès tchamps
Djåzève avou l' vint.
Dji m' sovin
Qu'i k'nohève lès toûrmints dèl plêve,
Lès djôyes dè molin.

I n-a tant de timps dèdjà,
Dj'èl vôreû bin r'véy cilà
Qu'aveût l'vwès dèl tére,
So mès dj'vès, i nîve sins r'la:
Pôrè-dj' ritrover ç' vôye-là,
Èt qwiter l'iviér
Èt qwiter l'iviér ?...

On djoû vinrè,
Dimin mutwèt,
Dji r'troûv'rè mès djôyes d'èfant,
Tot m' dispièrtant.

II

Dji m'sovin
D'on valèt qui saveût lès scrèts
Dè novê prétimps.
Dji m'sovin
D'on tchèstê d' brouhaye, d'on meûs d' may
Èt d'on tchèsturlin.

I n-a tant dè timps dèdjà
Dj'èl vôreû bin r'vèy cilà
Qu'aveût l' vwès dèl tére.
Mins mi prétimps n'èst pus là.
So mès dj'vès, i nîve sins r'la ;
Dj'a l'coûr à l'iviér,
Dj'a l'coûr à l'iviér...

On djoû vinrè,
Dimin mutwèt,
Dji r'trouv'rè mès djôyes d'èfant,
Tot m' dispièrtant ;
(bis)

Jean-Denys Boussart (Liège)
(*Les meilleures chansons wallonnes de Jean-Denys Boussart*, by René Chaumont, éditions Dricot, 2003)

Translation: I remember/ That a child at the edge of the fields/ Talked with the wind/ I remember/ That he knew the torments of the rain/ The joys of the mill// It's so long ago already/ I would like to see him again/ The one who had the voice of the earth/ On my hair it snows without stopping/ Will I find that road again/ And leave the winter/ And leave the winter…// II. I remember/ A boy who knew the secrets/ Of the new spring/ I remember/ A castle of brushwood, a month of May/ And a lord of the castle// It's so many years ago already,/ I would like to see him again/ The one who had the voice of the earth/ But my spring is no longer there/ On my hair it snows without stopping/ My heart is in winter/ My heart is in winter// A day will come/ Tomorrow perhaps,/ I will find my childhood joys again/ When I wake up. (repeat)

Viker

Ine siteûle qui blaw'têye,
In-oûhê qui pidjole,
Treûs jêbes, ine mågriyète
Et on riya d'èfant :
Rin ! cåzî rin…mins viker.

Ine foye qui coûrt so l' vôye
Li djône så qui vèrdjèye,
Ine blanke nûléye qui passe,
On rè d' solo so l'êwe:
Rin, cåzî rin…mins viker.

Li djalêye so lès f'gnèsses
Qu'a pondou dès fètchîres,
On feû è li tch'minêye
Quand l' vint hoûle so lès teûts :
Rin, cåzî rin…mins viker.

Ine violète qui r'florih
Quéques djoûs divant l' Noyé,
Li vîle qui tarlatêye
Po l'èfant qu'èst so s' hô:
Rin, cåzî rin…mins viker.

Ine main qu'aduze li vosse,
Ine doûce loukeûre qui v' sût
Èt qui fêt bate vosse coûr :
Deûs brès' qui v' sitrindèt :
C'èst tot çoula, viker !

Maggy Frisée, Sprimont
(extract from *Come ine sagwè è l'êr*, Like Something in the Air, Royal Caveau liégeois, 2003)

Translation: To Live. A star that twinkles/ A bird that hops,// Three blades of grass, a daisy/ And a child's laughter:/ Nothing, almost nothing… but to live.// A leaf dancing on the road,/ The young willow bending/ A white cloud passing,/ A ray of sunlight on the water:/ Nothing, almost nothing… but to live.// The frost on the windows/ That has painted ferns/ A fire in the hearth/ When the wind howls on the roofs/ Nothing, almost nothing… but to live// A violet blooming again/ A few days before Christmas./ The old woman humming/ For the child on her knees:/ Nothing, almost nothing… but to live.// A hand that brushes yours,/ A gentle look that follows you/ And makes your heart beat:/ Two arms that hold you tight:/ That is all of it, to live!

The translations of the texts by Louis Remacle and Albert Maquet, and of *L'Aveûle* by Franz Dewandelaer and *A tauve* by Jean Guillaume, are those of Maurice Piron, in *Poètes wallons d'aujourd'hui,* Gallimard, 1961. The other texts were translated by Joseph Bodson, with the help of the authors.
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